

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled).
2. (Currently Amended) An engine exhaust system for a vehicle, comprising:
at least two flexible couplings having elastic characteristics, positioned at two different locations in the exhaust system, the at least two flexible coupling including an upstream flexible coupling and a downstream flexible coupling;
an upstream component positioned further upstream of the upstream flexible coupling;
a downstream component positioned further downstream of the downstream flexible coupling and mounted to a body of the vehicle;
an intermediate component positioned between ~~the at least two flexible couplings~~ the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling and having mass, the intermediate component being coupled to the upstream component via the upstream flexible coupling and coupled to the downstream component via the downstream flexible coupling,
the intermediate component being free of direct connections to the body of the vehicle between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings such that the intermediate component freely floats between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings with respect to the body of the vehicle; and
a dynamic damper formed by virtue of the elastic characteristics and the mass, with the elastic characteristics of the flexible couplings being selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper.
3. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system according to claim 2, wherein the mass of the intermediate component is selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ An exhaust system according to claim 2,
wherein for a vehicle, comprising:

at least two flexible couplings having elastic characteristics, positioned at two
different locations in the exhaust system, each of the at least two flexible couplings includes
including a spherical joint;

an intermediate component positioned between the at least two flexible couplings and
having mass; and

a dynamic damper formed by virtue of the elastic characteristics and the mass, with
the elastic characteristics of the flexible couplings being selected to optimize the resonant
frequency of the dynamic damper.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) ~~The exhaust system according to claim 5~~ claim 2,
wherein

the upstream flexible coupling is configured and arranged to be closer to an engine
than to a muffler, the downstream flexible coupling is configured and arranged to be closer to
the muffler than to the engine, and the downstream component is configured and arranged to
be positioned between the downstream flexible coupling and the muffler, the downstream
component being configured and arranged to be mounted to the body of the vehicle.

7. (Currently Amended) The exhaust system according to claim 2, wherein
[[one]] the upstream flexible coupling has [[an]] a first elastic characteristic and
~~another~~ the downstream flexible coupling has [[an]] a second elastic characteristic, the first
and second elastic characteristics being selected such that a resonant frequency of the section
formed by the flexible couplings and the intermediate component is lower than 30Hz.

8. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system according to claim 2, wherein
the intermediate component has a mass which is selected such that a resonant
frequency of the section formed by the flexible couplings and the intermediate component is

lower than 30 Hz.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) An engine exhaust system for a vehicle, comprising:
at least two flexible couplings having elastic characteristics, positioned at two
different locations in the exhaust system, the at least two flexible coupling including an
upstream flexible coupling and a downstream flexible coupling;

an upstream component positioned further upstream of the upstream flexible
coupling;

a downstream component positioned further downstream of the downstream flexible
coupling and mounted to a body of the vehicle; and

an intermediate component positioned between the at least two flexible couplings the
upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling and having mass so that a
dynamic damper is formed by virtue of the elastic characteristics and the mass, with the
elastic characteristics of the flexible couplings being selected to optimize the resonant
frequency of the dynamic damper,

the intermediate component being coupled to the upstream component via the
upstream flexible coupling and coupled to the downstream component via the downstream
flexible coupling, the intermediate component being free of direct connections to the body of
the vehicle between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings such that the
intermediate component freely floats between the upstream and downstream flexible
couplings with respect to the body of the vehicle.

11. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 10,
wherein

the mass of the intermediate component is selected to optimize the resonant frequency
of the dynamic damper.

12. (Currently Amended) The engine exhaust system according to claim 10,
wherein

each of the upstream at least two flexible couplings coupling and the downstream flexible coupling includes a spherical joint.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) An engine exhaust system for a vehicle having a body, the engine exhaust system comprising:

an upstream flexible coupling having a first elastic characteristic;

a downstream flexible coupling having a second elastic characteristic;

an intermediate component positioned between the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling and having a mass, the intermediate component being ~~separated from~~ free of direct connections to a body of the vehicle between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings such that the intermediate component freely floats between the upstream and downstream flexible couplings with respect to the [[a]] body of the vehicle;

an upstream component positioned further upstream of the upstream flexible coupling, the upstream component being coupled to the intermediate component via the upstream flexible coupling; and

a downstream component positioned further downstream of the downstream flexible coupling, the downstream component being coupled to the intermediate component via the downstream flexible coupling, the downstream component being mounted to the body of the vehicle, with the elastic characteristics of the flexible couplings being selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the vibration system formed of the couplings and the intermediate component.

15. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 14, wherein

the mass of the intermediate component is selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the vibration system formed of the couplings and the intermediate component.

16. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 14, wherein

each of the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling includes a spherical joint.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 19, wherein

each of the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling includes a spherical joint.

19. (Previously Presented) An engine exhaust system to be positioned between an engine and a muffler of a vehicle having a body, the system comprising:

an upstream flexible coupling configured and arranged to be closer to the engine than to the muffler;

a downstream flexible coupling configured and arranged to be closer to the muffler than to the engine;

an intermediate component configured and arranged to be positioned between the upstream flexible coupling and the downstream flexible coupling, the intermediate component configured and arranged to be separated from the body of the vehicle; and

a downstream component configured and arranged to be positioned between the downstream flexible coupling and the muffler, the downstream component configured and arranged to be mounted to the body of the vehicle,

the upstream flexible coupling having a first elastic characteristic and the downstream flexible coupling having a second elastic characteristic, the first and second elastic characteristics being selected such that a resonant frequency of the section formed by the upstream flexible coupling, the downstream flexible coupling, and the intermediate component is lower than 20-30Hz.

20. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 19, wherein

the intermediate component has a mass which is selected such that a resonant

frequency of the section formed by the upstream flexible coupling, the downstream flexible coupling, and the intermediate component is lower than 20-30Hz.

21. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 14, wherein
the mass of the intermediate component and the elastic characteristics of the flexible couplings are selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper.

22. (Previously Presented) The engine exhaust system according to claim 10, wherein
the mass of the intermediate component and the elastic characteristics of the flexible couplings are selected to optimize the resonant frequency of the dynamic damper.